The Super Bazar has informed that some of the causes with regard to fall in the sales figure are (i) general market recession. (ii) curbs on Governmental purchase, (iii) shortage of working capital due to non-payment or delayed payment made by Govt. Departments for goods procured by them on credit from Super Bazar. The Super Bazar has, however, taken various steps to increase its sales like reduction in the profit margin, realisation of the amount blocked up in credit sales and other administrative steps etc.

(d) No Sir. The bye-laws of the Super Bazar do not provide for appointment of a Chairman cum Managing Director of the Super Bazar.

(Amount in lakhs)

Month	1997 -98		1998-99	
	Sales	Inventory	Sales	Inventory
April			888.14	880.40
May			978.25	981.18
June			901.00	1036.89
July			999.30	1006.34
August			1033.40	953.00
September			1075.11	928.97
October			999.17	961.84
November			990.85	1016.81
December			986.76	1099.68
January			886.72	1054.88
February	1086.29	923.32		
March	1391.42	726.40		

Setting up of consumer information centres in Kerala cities

1130. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether working of the Consumer Disputes Redressal Agencies in the last three years was reviewed at the meeting of the Secretaries of Food and Civil Supplies;

(b) if so, what are the decisions taken to protect the interests of the consumers;

(c) whether it has been decided to establish consumer information centres at Trivandrum, Cochin and Kozhikkode in Kerala;

(d) whether the Kerala Government has requested for additional financial assistance for consumer information centres in these three cities and for providing infrastructure facilities in Idukki and Wand District in Kerala; and

(e) if so, what steps were taken to provide financial assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Some of the Important decisions taken to safeguard the interests of consumers were as follows:—

(i) States/UTs to ensure provision of adequate infrastructure and supporting staff to the Consumer Fora. In this connection, they were advised to fully utilize the one-time-

grant sanctioned by the Central Govemment for improvement of the infrastructure of the Fora.

(ii) The vacant posts, wherever existing, of Presidents and Members of the State Commissions/District Fora to be filled up expenditiously.

(iii) Ensure constitution/re-constitution of the State Consumer Protection Councils and to hold regular meetings of the same in order to facilitate effective coordination between the State/UT and the Voluntary Consumer Organisation.

(c) No Sir.

(d) and (e) A proposal to set up consumer information centres at Thiruvananthapuram. Kochi and Kozhikkode in Kerala has been received. In this connection, the Standing Committee on Consumer Welfare Fund has taken a decision to provide financial assistance for one such centre in each State/UT, to begin with. Accordingly, the State Government of Kerala has been re quested to submit their proposal for one centre in the proforma prescribed under the Consumer Welfare Fund Rules 1992. The district forum at Idukki and Wyand districts in Kerala have already been provided with financial assistance of Rupees ten lakhs each under the Central Sector One-Time-Grant Scheme. Addi tional financial for these district fora is not covered under the said Scheme.

Representation against stringent provisions of E.C. Act

1131. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any memorandum from the Federation of All India Foodgrains Dealers' Association regarding stringent provisions in Essential Commodities Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The amendments proposed by Association inter-alia include, ignoring of minor and technical offences, giving of opportunity to the offender before initiation of criminal proceedings, non-inclusion of PDS dealers from the purview of the Act, allowances of 10% variation of stock to producers and 7% to dealers, making of all offences bailable, seizure of commodities to be limited only to that commodity in which there has been contravention, power of arrest given to an officer not below the rank of D.S.P. and second and subsequent offences to be considered within the same financial year.

(c) The suggestions of the Association have been considered by the Government. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 1999 is proposed to be introduced in the current Parliament Session.

Diversion of foodgrains from ration shops

1132. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a possibility of increasing leakages and diversion of foodgrains from ration shops, due to wide gap between the price of foodgrains for the below poverty line (BPL) and the above poverty line (APL) sections of population; and

(b) if so, what precautionary steps are proposed to be taken to prevent such diversions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) No, Sir. However, in an operation of the magnitude of PDS leakages here and there for various reasons including the gap between the